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## REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTICES.

A History of English Poetry. By W. J. COURTHOPE, C. B., M. A., D. Litt.,  
Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford. Vols. I and II. Macmillan & Co., New York and London, 1895, 1897. \$2.50 each.

These volumes form the opening instalments of Professor Courthope's work, intended to be the first *complete* history of English poetry that we have had since Warton, or rather that we have ever had, and we trust that the fates may be more propitious to him than to ten Brink and Morley, cut off before they had more than half completed their great designs.

That a complete history of English poetry is wanted will not be questioned, for in the multiplicity of monographs and partial works, of single volumes treating certain periods, and of text-books of English literature, we have no work that gives a thorough and scholarly treatment of all our literature, or even of the poetical literature alone. It is to be regretted that the plan of the work did not include a history of the prose literature also, as in the works of ten Brink and Morley, for literature is individual as well as national, and the separation of a man's work in poetry from his work in prose looks like depriving him of a part of his individuality, dividing his mind in two, as it were, and giving but a partial view of the man himself—but it is not worth while to quarrel with what we have.

The first volume covers the period included in "The Middle Ages: influence of the Roman empire; the encyclopaedic education of the Church, and the feudal system"; the second, that marked by "the Renaissance and the Reformation: influence of the Court and the Universities." It will thus be seen that the first volume corresponds generally with Part I of Jusserand's "Literary History of the English People," published in the same year in English, although the French edition appeared the year before (1894). Prof. Courthope's preface gives his point of view. He quotes Pope's scheme, which remained but a scheme, and Gray's design, which he abandoned on learning of Warton's work, but, with his well-known procrastination, it is doubtful whether he would ever have executed it, even if Warton had not been engaged on a similar work. Courthope regrets that Warton set about his work—which was never completed—"in the spirit of an antiquary" rather than in that of a literary critic, and thinks that he was better fitted for the latter than for the former, hence the deficiencies of Warton's history. He then explains the principles of his own work. Taking warning from the experience of Warton, he concludes that the design of the historian of English poetry must possess unity; Gray's design fulfilled this condition, but his classification did not correspond with the facts; Courthope aims "to treat poetry as an expression of the imagination, not simply of the individual poet, but of the English people." He thinks too that a historical treatment of poetry "must exhibit the principle

of its growth and movement," and finds fault, justly, with Taine because he looks with disdain upon the minor poets of the fourteenth century and finds little of interest in them, which causes blunders with regard to them. But "The Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists regarded themselves as the lineal descendants of the poets of the fourteenth century," and so "we must examine the foundations on which they built." While rightly regarding Taine's criticism of our earlier poets as too depreciatory, Courthope takes exception to Pater's and Symonds's views of the Renaissance "as a sudden and isolated movement of the human mind, which cannot be explained by the ordinary methods of historic investigation." He thinks rather that "the business of historical criticism is to trace the stream of thought that connects age with age, and the almost imperceptible gradations which mark the advance of language and metrical harmony." This causes him too to deal "not only with the progress of poetical invention, but with the more technical question of the development of metrical harmony." For taking up this subject he apologizes in advance both to the philologist and to the general reader. No apology is necessary to the former if he gives the correct results as ascertained by philologists.

After this sketch of his object and principles in the preface, Prof. Courthope announces his intention of tracing "the history of the art of English poetry from the time of Chaucer to the time of Scott." He thus disclaims any intention of giving a history of poetry anterior to Chaucer, and justifies himself for abandoning the method of ten Brink and Jusserand, on the ground that "between the poetry produced in England before the Norman Conquest and the poetry of Chaucer there is absolutely no connection." But half of the volume is taken up with a consideration of poetry in England antecedent to Chaucer, and chapters III and IV treat specially "the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons," and "Anglo-Norman poetry"; so he himself feels that this period cannot be altogether neglected, and however distinct the alliteration of Langland is from that of Layamon and from the earlier normal scheme of the Anglo-Saxons, it is scarcely probable that Langland would have originated the metrical scheme of his great poem if he had not had earlier models, and the history of "the development of metrical harmony" alone would have necessitated an investigation of the form and style, and hence the contents, of these earlier models, so that the historical connection cannot be overlooked.

Renouncing then any "attempt to derive the originals of Chaucer from the cradles of the Anglo-Saxon race," the author seeks "to trace his imagination through its immediate literary sources," to "connect it with the poetry of races of partial Latin descent," judging that in this way cause and effect may be linked together. These peoples, while differing in language and race, "are united by a common system of faith, education, and military institution," and their writers deal with similar problems of thought, which take their rise in a more ancient system of civilization, "but not joined to the life of Europe in the Middle Ages by any apparently continuous stream of literature." It is the course of this stream that Prof. Courthope proposes to trace in order "to arrive at the primal fountains of mediaeval poetry." Next will come "the progressive stages in the formation of the mediaeval stream of thought, which feeds the literatures of England, France and Italy," and its connection with "the great

system of Graeco-Roman culture, which seems—but only seems—to disappear from the world after the death of Boethius.” Then the course of the national language must be explored “in order to observe the changes produced by Saxon and Norman influences on the art of metrical expression before it received the developments of Chaucer.” Finally, the meaning of the word “Renaissance” must be examined, and “the early effects of the movement on the literature of Europe.” We can then appreciate the evolution of poetical thought and language that characterized the art of succeeding poets.

This comprehensive method is analogous to that of Prof. Freeman in the field of history, for it seeks to connect the modern with the ancient, to evolve the former out of the latter, to show that the modern is the legitimate descendant of the ancient, and is not separated by any hard-and-fast line. Like Freeman’s unity of history—which he enforced on all occasions—it emphasizes the principle of the unity of literature. This work needed to be done, for, so far as we know, it had not yet been done for English literature, historians of literature apparently thinking it necessary only to begin with Chaucer as an isolated phenomenon, as if he too were not the child of his age, and often to overlook the antecedent literature.

After this preliminary sketch of his plan, showing the philosophic method which he intends to pursue, Prof. Courthope examines “the character and sources of mediaeval poetry,” his object being, for a right understanding of the character of English poetry, “to appreciate the nature of the vast change in the life of imagination effected during the decline of the Roman Empire and the gradual formation of the mediaeval system of Europe.” The subject is treated at some length under the four heads: “(1) The decline of the civic spirit under the Roman Empire, and the corresponding decay of classical taste; (2) the transformation of the system of imperial education by the Latin Church; (3) the rise of a new mythology among the nations embraced within the system of Latin Christianity; and (4) the influence of feudal institutions, of the scholastic logic, and of Oriental culture” (p. 14).

Our limits will not permit a detailed examination of each of these points. Suffice it to say that, after a brief discussion of the first two, Prof. Courthope concludes “that, in this continuous stream of education . . . we find the controlling force which has, in one form or another, guided the imagination and judgment of every generation of poets from the days of Augustus down to our own era.” The third point is treated at greater length, and the replacing of the pagan mythology by the Christian, and its effects on poetry, are discussed, especially when accompanied by the growth of heroic legends, as those of Troy and Alexander from the ancient world, of Charlemagne and King Arthur from the modern. This cause, it seems to us, had the greatest influence on the progress of mediaeval poetry, as a similar cause affected ancient poetry. The fourth point is next treated, and the common bond of minstrelsy is found to connect the Teutonic *Scop* (Prof. Courthope prefers the older form *Scóp*) and the Romance *Trouvère* and *Troubadour*; the *Gleeman* becomes the *Jongleur*. “Teutonic, as well as Celtic, poetry is, in its origin, an embodiment of the imagination of the Tribe, not of the State” (p. 60), but the character of this minstrelsy changed, especially under the influences that emanated from Charlemagne, “the last great figure of Teutonic epic song,” and “the decline in the

spirit of minstrelsy led to a great variety of style in metrical composition." The result was shorter compositions and a great variety of tales; society became more settled, and "the Frankish intellect, coming under the influence of an old civilization, began to aim at new artistic ideals." The scholastic logic too affected literature, as in the case of Dante and Chaucer; so, while "the motive power of Christian European poetry springs from the oral minstrelsy of the Teutonic [i. e. Germanic] and Scandinavian tribes," this was "profoundly modified by contact with Latin civilization," and the resulting effects.

Inquiry is next directed to "the origin of the metrical forms and literary models adopted by the early poets of France and Italy, who gave the first examples of composition to the fathers of English verse" (p. 69). The author shows how the prosody of Latin verse was modified by the prevalence of the principle of accent over that of quantity, referring to Prudentius, who treated *mathesis* as having the second syllable short, and Diomedes, who treated *armatus* as an amphibrach. So in popular verses the laws of quantity were soon completely disregarded, and this was done deliberately in the hymns of the early Christian fathers, the Hymn of St. Ambrose, cited by Bede (*De Metrica. Ratione*), being given as an illustration. Other illustrations of this point follow, and "The sum of what has been said as to the history of modern European metres is, that many of the Greek metres were imported into the Latin language by the literary Roman poets; that some of them were afterwards modified, by the disregard of quantity, to suit the requirements of the popular ear; and that, still later, by some obvious retrenchments, they were accommodated to the changed character of the Romance languages which grew up out of the rustic Latin." But as this was not sufficient to explain "the rise of the new system of rhyming architecture," the author traces it to the Arabs, from whom the poets derived their models of harmony. The Italian poets took them from the Arabs of Sicily and the French from those of Spain, and from the Arabs came not only the Italian and Provençal metres, "but even the poetical conventions observed by Petrarch and the troubadours."

This is but a brief summary of Prof. Courthope's interesting chapter on the mediæval poetry of Europe, but it has been thought advisable to give it, as the subject is usually omitted in histories of English literature, and as it illustrates his attempt "to bridge over in various directions the gulf that seems to separate the civilization of the ancient world from the thought and imagination of the community of Europe in the Middle Ages, at the time when the rising nations were beginning to make use of the vulgar tongues for the purposes of poetical composition" (p. 78).

He now travels back to England and traces the fusion of the elements of the English language from Anglo-Saxon times to Chaucer. The chapter on Anglo-Saxon poetry need not detain us long. This has been much better done elsewhere. Prof. Courthope is evidently not so much of a philologist as of a literary critic, and forgets the old saw, *ne sutor supra crepidam*. A summary of the *Beowulf* is given, based on Arnold and Earle, and a notice of the *Byrhtnoth* and of the *Metrical Paraphrase*, "once ascribed to Caedmon." We should be glad to have the grounds of the "certainly" in the enumeration of the works of Cynewulf's composition. There is a reference to Kemble's *Codex Vercel-*

*lensis* for Cynewulf's date, which date has been long since abandoned by scholars, a short extract from Weymouth's translation of the *Elene*, a reference to Stopford Brooke's *History* to combat his view that Cynewulf was equal to Caedmon, and a short account of the *Crist*, with reference to Gollancz's edition. A few lines from *Beowulf*, in which there are several misprints, are given "as a good sample of the style," and a few pages follow (in which there are several errors) intended to show how Anglo-Saxon changed to English. The point of view may be given from the following quotation of one "change": "5. The gradual substitution of the termination *ing* for that of *and* in the present participle. This change at first sight seems anomalous, considering that the Norman-French *ant* resembled the Saxon ending. The latter, however, in the southern part of the country, was replaced by the variation *ind*, and it may be conjectured that the final labial [*sic*] of this ending, under the influence of the Normans, with whom the *t* of the present participle was mute, gave way to the guttural *g*" (pp. 109, 110). It would have been better to omit this whole antiquated linguistic discussion. In its attempt to turn Anglo-Saxon into English with a wave of the hand, it reminds us of Jefferson's *Essay towards facilitating instruction in the Anglo-Saxon language*, but that was one hundred years ago. It is not well to make an excursus into language in a purely literary work.

The chapters on "Anglo-Norman Poetry" and on "The Early Renaissance" are better done, and here we traverse the ground of Jusserand's Book II. The genius of the Normans is contrasted with that of the Saxons; their poetical activity includes three stages, that of Wace and Benoit de Ste. More in the twelfth century, the romantic poetry (and prose) of the *chansons de geste* and the King Arthur cycle, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the lays and fables of Marie de France, who is placed by Courthope in the reign of Henry III, although Jusserand says she "lived in the time of Henry II." Orm and Layamon are touched upon, but the *Owl and Nightingale* receives the fullest attention. The author places it in the reign of Edward I, rather later than it is usually assigned, and thinks that it shows "the influence of French models" and "a careful study of the style of Marie." The *Cursor Mundi* shows the writer "to be a genuine descendant of Caedmon, though breathing the atmosphere of the Middle Ages." If so, this helps the connection between Caedmon and Chaucer. A notice of the works of Robert of Brunne and Robert of Gloucester closes the chapter. The *King Horn* and *Havelok the Dane* are barely mentioned, but they still further aid the historical connection and might have been described.

The early Renaissance is treated as affecting Italy, France, and England. "Up to the middle of the thirteenth century European poetry may be said to possess a universal character," and that, "because it reflects the image of a society which still preserves many of the essential features of the universal Roman Empire." "The Renaissance" is called a phrase at once misleading and obscure, and exception is taken to the usual definitions, "for on the one hand the pioneers of the movement were the schoolmen, . . . and on the other, the stream of classical culture . . . had never entirely ceased to flow." It was "a tendency inherent in the condition of things, and it was promoted from different quarters by the independent action of all the greatest minds of the

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries." This seems like saying it was so because it was so, and fails to give any adequate cause. Until this great movement affected each country in turn there was no national literature, and the production of such was one of its greatest effects. The effects in Italy, as seen in the works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, and in France, as represented by the *Roman de la Rose*, of which a full analysis is given, are traced, and then we pass to England, where "the idea of national life and of the just relations between Church and State," had been conceived more clearly than in any other country of Europe. This development of political liberty had its foundation in the institutions of the Saxon race, but "had the Saxon race remained in complete isolation, a certain slowness of temperament, which is apt to disguise its more heroic qualities, might have sunk it in torpor and decay." The Danes "infused new blood and energy into the northern part of the island," and "the Normans from the south communicated a fresh shock to the national life by the introduction of feudal institutions, and of a ruling race possessed of all the qualities in which the exhausted Saxon dynasty was deficient" (p. 186). As these results did occur, we cannot speculate on what might have happened if the Danes and Normans had not invaded England, but from the dogged energy and persistency of the Saxon race, which have ever characterized the English people, and from the conspicuous lack of such qualities in the French people, the nearest of kin to the Normans, we may reasonably suppose that the basic qualities of the English would have re-asserted themselves in the course of time even if there had been no such cataclysm as the Norman invasion, which more or less repressed the native race for many years, and even if the result had shown somewhat less elasticity of temperament and brilliancy of imagination. English = three-fourths Saxon + one-fourth Norman. This spirit of political liberty is seen in the political songs of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (see Wright's *Political Songs* in the *Rolls Series*), several of which, in English, French and Latin, and some of the macaronic kind (French and Latin), are commented on. Abuses of all sorts, and especially the universal corruption of justice in both the ecclesiastical and the king's courts, are ridiculed and denounced. "Non est lex sana quod regi sit mea lana," illustrates the tenor of one of this class. So also,

"Sum cum justitiario  
Qui te modo vario  
Possum adjuvare,  
Si vis impetrare  
Per suum subsidium.  
Da michi dimidium  
Et te volo juvare" (p. 193).

The song after the battle of Lewes—which has also been separately edited—states the respective positions of the king and the barons. The patriotic poetry of Laurence Minot (1333–1352) illustrates another side of the national spirit. The effect of the Renaissance in England was then to awaken this spirit of political liberty, to "reveal a consciousness of united purpose and corporate pride in the nation, for which no contemporary parallel can be found in any other country of Europe." "The time had not yet come for

England when the masterpieces of ancient literature could exercise a refining influence on the efforts of her native genius" (p. 198). This, however, was to come a little later.

Prof. Courthope calls Langland the Naevius and Chaucer the Ennius of English poetry, and the two following chapters are devoted respectively to a study of each of these great poets. This order is preferable to that of M. Jusserand, who treats Chaucer and Gower before Langland, whereas the first form of Langland's work was written before Chaucer had even translated the *Romaunt of the Rose*. Langland's *Vision of Piers Plowman* is rightly called "a classic work in English literature"; his "vigorous satire, vivid powers of description, strong sense of justice, so faithfully reflect the conscience of the English people, that his *Vision* often seems to be projecting its light upon the ethical problems of our own day." The author discusses "the two great principles on which society in the Middle Ages rested, Catholicism and Chivalry," and shows that they "reached their grand climacteric, and sank into rapid decay." Even before Wycliff the religious sense of the time embodied itself in Langland's great work. It is analysed very fully, and a parallel is drawn between Dante and Langland: "both poets present an image of the ideal or spiritual order of nature and human society, in striking contrast with the actual course of the world"; "but Dante's conception was based on the metaphysical side of Catholic Christianity, Langland's on the ethical and practical side"; this gives the keynote of the criticism.

A brief extract from the *Brunanburh*, with many misprints, and one from *Piers Plowman*, are given as illustrative of the metre, but Prof. Courthope does not analyse the structure of the Anglo-Saxon verse. The two do not admit of strict comparison. Langland merely employs, though with great skill, the old-fashioned alliteration as an ornament to his verse, for he has been to some extent affected by the Renaissance in his metrical form, and does not attempt to reproduce accurately the original rhythm, but he uses the same metrical principle. His metre is sometimes very regular, but at others very irregular, and at variance with the older scheme.

An interesting chapter on Chaucer and his works follows that on Langland. It is confessedly based on Prof. Skeat's edition, but unfortunately Courthope does not always follow Skeat in his quotations, and hence his text is sometimes bad and needs emendation. We note in passing on p. 252 the common misprint of *Village* for *Visage*. As to the burning question of the final *-e*, Courthope is inclined to follow Payne in *Essays on Chaucer* (Chaucer Society, IV, pp. 84-154) vs. Skeat. He thinks no positive answer can be returned to the question "whether or not it was pronounced at the end and in the *caesura* of an English verse, in words where it had a grammatical significance" (p. 256). He is willing to grant that "strong arguments are forthcoming on both sides of the question," but he leaves each reader to follow his own taste. This view would now be regarded as antiquated, and most scholars would certainly prefer to follow Morris and Skeat and pronounce the final *-e*, notwithstanding the "feminine rhymes." The existing translation of the *Romaunt of the Rose* is regarded as Chaucer's, and we are not even informed that there is any doubt about it. An extract from it is given as showing that Chaucer "furnished the English language with a new standard of versification which no poet



henceforth could afford to disregard"; and it is "not only remarkable as making a landmark in the refinement of our versification," but "it marks with equal significance the rise of a new spirit in English poetry, the importation of thoughts and themes from the Continent, announcing the approach of the Renaissance" (p. 258). While this work and, at a farther remove, *Troilus and Criseyde*, are treated as showing Chaucer's powers as a translator, the *Book of the Duchess*, the *Parlement of Foules*, the *House of Fame*, and the *Legend of Good Women*, show his powers as an imitator; and the *Canterbury Tales*, as an inventor. They are "the full harvest of the art of the trouvère," who "was the lineal literary descendant of the tribal gleeman" (p. 279).

The trouvère was dependent upon the *Fables of Bidpai* and the *History of the Seven Wise Masters*, of Hindoo and Persian origin, which provided him with his models. Thus originated mediaeval story-telling. "The main object of the literary trouvère was to collect appropriate subjects, and Chaucer, with his habits of encyclopaedic study and omnivorous reading, had amassed a supply of stories, not indeed so numerous as those collected by Boccaccio, but covering a wider range of tastes and interests" (p. 288). His framework was his own, and who but Chaucer could have given us such inimitable pictures of the various characters in English society? A table of the *Tales*, with their respective sources, is given, and a summary of the time spent on the journey, after Skeat. A criticism of Chaucer's excellences closes the chapter, and he is pronounced "the first *national* poet of England." Chaucer emancipated poetry from the trammels of "Metaphysics, Allegory, and Theology, and from the deductive methods of thought encouraged by encyclopaedic science," and "reanimated it by the old classical principle of the direct imitation of nature." Others developed this principle, Ariosto, Cervantes, Molière, "but to Chaucer must be assigned the honor of having led the way." Thus the movement of the fourteenth century from the mediaeval to the modern had its pioneer in Chaucer.

Our limits permit but a mention of the succeeding chapters. One follows on "The Epical School of Chaucer—Gower, Lydgate, Occleve," in which these poets are much more fully treated than by Jusserand. The Progress of Allegory in English Poetry is next considered, as illustrated in the *Pearl* and the *Vision of Piers the Plowman*, which exemplify two opposite modes of treatment, the contemplative and the active, in the *Temple of Glass*, which follows the rules of the fashionable Love-allegory, in the *Court of Love*, of much later date, and in the *King's Quair*, which stands midway between the other two, and "forms a landmark in the history of allegorical poetry." These are followed by the works of Henryson, Dunbar, and Douglas, in Scotland; Hawes, Skelton, and Barclay, in England. The last has been usually known only from his translation of Brandt's *Ship of Fools*, but his *Eclogues*, in which "the bucolic style is adopted merely as a vehicle of a moral allegory," are more fully treated by Prof. Courthope. Allegory was a most popular form of composition, and it seems that scarcely any writer could avoid using it as a vehicle for moral instruction. It is, indeed, as old as Esop, and the *Faerie Queen* and the *Pilgrim's Progress* are doubtless the most brilliant examples of it in English literature, but the taste for it has declined, and it is now considered heavy and antiquated.

The Rise of the Drama in England is next treated in the familiar forms of the Mysteries and the Moralities, but we find nothing new,—a mere synopsis of the well-known authorities.

A chapter on the Decay of English Minstrelsy succeeds, and here the deficiency in Jusserand is supplied. Percy's and Ritson's views are discussed; the author considers Percy "amply warranted in concluding that 'the minstrels seem to have been the genuine successors of the ancient bards.'" His very free "editing" of his MS. is not, however, endorsed. The changes in the art of minstrelsy are traced, "as illustrated by the progress of society from the tribal to the civil state, by the transition from oral to written poetry, and by the character of the ballad." The ballad is defined, its origin and development are treated, and some illustrations are given, particularly the *Mary Hamilton*, as showing that the ballad "was a type of poem adapted by the professors of the declining art of minstrelsy from the romances once in favor with the educated classes."

A Retrospect of some half-dozen pages, giving a summary of the History, closes the volume. With the exception of the third chapter on the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons, Prof. Courthope has given us in this volume an interesting contribution to a complete history of English poetry.

In the second volume the same design as that noted in the first volume, of tracing the course of English poetry by the stream of the national thought and imagination, and by its European relations, is continued, and it is now all the more important because "the sixteenth century is the great age of transition from mediæval to modern times; the chief poets of the period work from the basis of culture provided for them by the Middle Ages, but they are alive to all the influences of their own age; and, like their ancestor Chaucer, they avail themselves of ideas and feelings flowing in upon them from a foreign source." A sketch is first given of the religious and political system of Europe in the early sixteenth century, "in the still Catholic European community," as shown in the Diet of Augsburg (1518). The idea of the modern state arose out of the decaying fabric of the Christian Republic, and "Spain, France, and England began to display a clearly marked individuality in all matters relating to religion, art, literature and manners." This is seen in the works of the great European writers. The *Courtier* of Castiglione and the *Discourses* and the *Prince* of Machiavelli, "particularly impressed the minds of knightly poets and scholarly dramatists in England." Mr. Courthope accounts for Machiavelli by the circumstances by which he was surrounded, and thinks that his works exerted an all-powerful influence. The *Colloquies* of Erasmus too exerted a strong influence "on the more reflective part of European society in the sixteenth century, by educating public opinion indirectly in a more rational scheme of manners and conduct"; and Luther's treatise on *Christian Liberty* exerted a similar influence in the religious sphere. The three countries of Spain, England, and France were sufficiently organized to receive the influences of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Spain resisted them; More's *Utopia* showed how "the unity of Christendom might be expanded to satisfy modern requirements," and it was destined to bear fruit hereafter; in France power was concentrated in the hands of the king, who was absolute; the writers reflected the ideas of the Court, and lacked the ideas of rational liberty and toleration seen in the

*Utopia*. The author traces these influences so as to give a view of "the collective forces acting on the imagination of Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century." Especially "the idea of liberty of thought and action, in the constitution both of the State and the Individual," arises, and all of these influences affect the English imagination, and "begin to break up the solid structure of traditional belief and ancient chivalry." Prof. Courthope's method is thus seen to be very different from that of Prof. Morley, more philosophic, and directed to tracing the history of ideas and how these European ideas affected English literature.

After this sketch of "intellectual conflict in Europe in the sixteenth century," the following chapters are devoted to showing its effect in England in the poems of Wyatt and Surrey, the pioneers of the English Renaissance. In the poems of Wyatt we see the first results, since Chaucer, of the study of Italian literature. He is distinguished from the preceding poets by "the individual energy of his thought and his persistent imitation of foreign models." To him is due the credit of the introduction of the sonnet into English literature; but, although he followed the Petrarchan model, from his unfortunate lack of ear he was unable to make the improvement in English versification which characterized the poems of Surrey. In his satires he imitated Alamanni in his use of the *terza rima*, and he also combined the Alexandrine with the Septenar, so that he struck out new paths in English verse, even if he did not possess the skill to handle his instrument very successfully. "Wyatt is a noble figure in English poetry. His strength, his ardor, his manliness, his complete freedom from affectation, make him a type of what is finest in the national character, and there is little exaggeration in the very fine epitaph written on him by his great contemporary, Surrey"—which epitaph closes the chapter.

Surrey was a man of more ardent disposition than Wyatt, and not so grave a character. He lacked Wyatt's "vehement individuality," "but he succeeds where Wyatt failed in naturalizing the ideas he borrows by the beauty of his style," and to it "he owes his great position in the history of English poetry." His unfortunate death, or murder rather, on a trumped-up charge by the advisers of the king, when Henry was on his death-bed, was a great loss to English letters. Like Sir Philip Sidney later, he was the flower of chivalry, and both by birth and character was a fine representative of English nobility. His "Fair Geraldine" was an idealized lady-love, and his love-poems were, like Wyatt's, modeled after Petrarch; but he possessed higher gifts than Wyatt of "terseness, sweetness, purity, and facility of style." His reform of English versification is traced under several heads, showing that he grounded himself on Chaucer, but it is unfortunate that Prof. Courthope should use such a poor text, with so many misprints, as that given on p. 87 as a specimen of the beginning of the Prologue; Prof. Skeat might have supplied him with a better one. Surrey's sonnet-stanza is that used afterwards by Shakspere and is not the Petrarchan form. He too first used blank verse in his translation of Virgil; and "he was also the first to refine the system of poetical diction so as to adapt it to the reformed versification."

But while Wyatt and Surrey were thus refining the style and versification of English poetry after Italian models, political poetry was being developed in

Scotland in the writings of Sir David Lyndsay, and a little later in England in the huge collection of political tragedies known as the *Mirror for Magistrates*, which owes its claim to consideration as poetry to Sackville's *Induction* and his *Complaint of the Duke of Buckingham*. Lyndsay was a follower of Douglas and Dunbar in his use of dream and allegory, but he was more. He used his allegory to illustrate the political condition of the country. Lyndsay's manner is still mediaeval: it points backward, but his matter points forward, and, in its "union of Lutheran piety, political philosophy, and classical imagery," reflects the mind of the Scottish aristocracy on the eve of the Reformation. A full account is given of the composition of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, and its language and versification are pronounced to be "full of instruction for the student who seeks to trace systematically the growth of the art of English poetry" (p. 17). The transition in style from the rude and archaic of the early sixteenth century to the finished manner of the Elizabethan writers is here seen. It culminates in Sackville's *Induction*, for Sackville showed the beneficial influence of Surrey. "Of the epic poets of England, if Chaucer is the first to exhibit the genuinely classic spirit, Sackville is the first to write in the genuinely classic manner."

A chapter follows on the translations of the classics, due to the establishment of the new learning in the universities, and the love of learning shown by Elizabeth herself. "Wolsey promoted the study of Greek by the foundation of Christ Church [Oxford]. Colet and Grocyn lectured on the Greek orators and poets in the same university; and Cheke and Ascham familiarized their scholars at Cambridge with the dialogues of Plato, the philosophy most highly approved by the reformers of the Continent. Here was an influence that could not fail to be felt in literature. But Elizabeth, according to Roger Ascham, knew Latin, Greek, French and Italian, and could speak with facility all of those languages. Ascham was her preceptor in Latin and Greek for two years, so he ought to know. This learned influence communicated itself to the Court, the Universities, and the writers. A translation of the *Aeneid* had been made by Douglas in 1513, Surrey had translated Books II and IV into blank verse, the first in English, and now Thos. Phaer, 1555-1560, and Thos. Twine, 1562, translated the whole of it into the iambic septenar. Jasper Heywood, 1559-61, translated three of the tragedies attributed to Seneca into the same ballad metre; and Arthur Golding, 1565-67, turned into the same verse Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; this was the translation which Shakspeare used. All of these translations testify to a desire for a knowledge of the new learning in English form.

Now came many imitators and followers of Wyatt and Surrey in the numerous *Miscellanies* of Elizabeth's reign, which were preceded in 1557 by the most important of all, *Tottel's Miscellany*, containing the poems of Wyatt and Surrey, of Thomas, Lord Vaux, Grimald, and others. Grimald led in the pedantic and conceited style of the later school of Cowley, dubbed by Dr. Johnson "metaphysical," doubtless merely because it was unnatural. He was the first to imitate Surrey in the use of blank verse, in which he showed his good sense, writing in that verse a poem on the *Death of Cicero*. Googe followed with his *Eglogues*, *Epitaphes*, and *Sonnettes*, and Turberville, with his *Songs*, *Epitaphs*, and *Epigrams*. Googe, who translated *The Zodiac of Life*, of Marcellus

Palingenius, and Turberville, Ovid's *Heroical Epistles* and Mantuan's *Eclogues*. Churchyard, who had contributed "a tragedy called *Shore's Wife*" to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, contributed poems also to these *Miscellanies*, and lived to be called old-fashioned by the later Elizabethans. But he was far exceeded by Gascoigne, after Sackville the greatest name in English letters before Spenser. Gascoigne was a leader in many ways and deserves more credit than he has usually received. Prof. Courthope does not seem to be aware of Prof. Schelling's excellent monograph on his life and works. He wrote sonnets, lyrics, a satire, *The Steel Glass*, and other *Posies*, and was a critic of English verse—but we shall have to return to him under the drama.

Gascoigne died in 1577, and we now reach the middle of Elizabeth's reign, the beginning of the Elizabethan efflorescence in literature. The preceding thirty or forty years had been preparation and now we have fulfillment. Three chapters follow, treating Court Dialect, as seen in Lyly, Court Romance, in Sidney, and Court Allegory, in Spenser. Euphuism is treated as a movement towards refinement in language which affected every literature in Europe. Although the *Euphues* and the *Arcadia* are written in prose, the author thinks they are "so closely associated with metrical composition and with the progress of English taste that it would be unphilosophical to regard them as beyond the limits of a history of English poetry." This illustrates the disadvantage of treating poetry and prose separately in a history of English literature; they mutually act upon each other, and both must be considered in any complete view of the national thought and imagination. Passing over what is said of Italy, Spain and France, we find the problem in England of forming a standard of literary composition more difficult because of the mixture of races and languages, but, fortunately for the development of style, "French influence so far prevailed that the order of words in a sentence follows the logical order of the thought." This is an advantage, it may be noted, that the Germans have never attained, and hence their involved and cumbrous prose style. The introduction of Latinized words was carried so far that many never took root. Witness Douglas's *dulcorate* and *facund*, Lyndsay's *prepotent* and *celsitude*, and Wilson's specimen (p. 183), which he says is no caricature, containing such words as *revoluting*, *ingenia*, *accessited*, *adjuvate*, *obtestate*, *contignate*, *invigilate*, &c., &c., so that it requires that one should know Latin in order to know English. It may be remarked in passing that the date here given for Wilson's *Art of Rhetoric*, the first treatise of the kind in English, is 1562, whereas on p. 289 it is given as 1553, and this was not the first edition. The date of this work is of importance as bearing upon the date of our first comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister*. The history of Euphuism is traced, and it is carried back, as usual, to Guevara. If Prof. Courthope knows of Landmann's study of the subject, he does not mention it. The common characteristics of this stylistic fad, as seen in Lyly's work, natural history metaphors, antithesis and alliteration—"transverse alliteration," as Landmann calls it—are duly noted, and its great influence remarked. "*Euphues* was as much esteemed by polite society as by the critics. It was accepted with the *Arcadia* as fixing the standard of eloquence at Court," *Euphues* is called "an example of rhetoric in the language of love composed to suit the taste of the Court," hence its flattery, its logic and its illustration.

"The metaphorical style in the love-poetry of the Euphuists is a natural growth of the classical Renaissance: it marks the decay of the allegorical interpretation of nature, which itself largely accounts for the abundant use of metaphor in the poetry of the Middle Ages." The influence of *Euphuus* lasted for a hundred years, and Prof. Courthope considers Lyly's discovery as of permanent value, for "he perceived the advantage of clearness, correctness and precision, in the arrangement of words." For this he should receive due credit, and his style, when purged of its unnecessary adjuncts, left a residuum of value in the history of English prose style. "Addison and Steele . . . learned from Lyly how to present genuine thoughts in an artistic form; and Burke, Johnson, and Macaulay, . . . followed his example in working up sentences and periods to the climax required for the just and forcible presentation of the argument"<sup>1</sup> (pp. 201-2).

Sidney was at the head of the school opposed to the Euphuists, and he criticises them in one of his sonnets. Sidney, Dyer, Harvey, and Spenser for a time, until his good sense predominated, wished to reform English versification after the Latin, and perpetrated certain barbarous hexameters. Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford, was at the head of the other party, and was a great favorer of the Euphuists; he and Sidney quarreled and it came near resulting in a duel. On Sidney's retirement from the Court in consequence of his bold protest against the Anjou marriage, he amused himself with writing the *Arcadia* for his sister Mary, "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother," intermingling poetry with his prose romance. This work is treated at some length and its literary defects are commented on. "The action is wanting in human interest, the characters are conventional, the structure of the story is confused and irregular." The style too is criticised: "Nothing is said plainly; commonplace is disguised by metaphor; style is mechanically elevated by a tricky arrangement of words." But, "regarded historically, as a mirror of the feelings of Sidney and the best of his contemporaries, and as a work of fiction contributing to the development of the English drama, the *Arcadia* is a most interesting monument." The element which affected contemporary taste was derived from the study of Montemayor, and consisted in "concentrating the main interest of his narrative in the complications of the love-plots." The dramatists were indebted to the *Arcadia* for sentiment and landscape, for development of action and character, and for the complications arising from the disguise of sex.

The *Astrophel and Stella* sonnets are also treated with critical insight, and Prof. Courthope differs from several other critics, Lamb, Trench, and Symonds, in his interpretation. He thinks that their "theory of a profound and all-pervading passion is contradicted by the facts of the case, by the character of Sidney, by the character of the sonnets themselves." Each of these points is developed, and I must say that I am inclined to agree with Prof. Courthope. This attempt of critics to find in ideal love-poems some personal reference, which has been "run into the ground" in the case of Shakspeare's Sonnets, seems to me far-fetched and mistaken. Penelope Devereux was a young girl

<sup>1</sup>I may be permitted to remark just here that in my "Selections in English Prose from Elizabeth to Victoria" (1897) I purposely begin with Lyly as the pioneer in the formation of English prose style, and I fully concur with Prof. Courthope in giving credit to Lyly for his contribution to this object.

who attracted Sidney's attention when she was under fifteen, and her father was anxious for the match. Some cause, now unknown, prevented it, and after she was married to Lord Rich at the age of nineteen, she became Sydney's "Laura," and received his ideal adoration. "Artistic opposition to the Euphuists" also inspired these Sonnets, and "sonnet after sonnet sounds the note that love alone is an adequate source of inspiration, without the artificial supplement of science and learning." This is a much more reasonable theory than the personal one.

The chapter on Court Allegory is a very full criticism of Spenser. As the greatest genius since Chaucer, and the writer in whom the influences of the Elizabethan age culminated, he receives the fullest share of critical attention. "He wanted no quality required to place him in the same class with Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, and perhaps I may add Chaucer, but that supreme gift of insight and invention which enables the poet to blend conflicting ideas into an organic form." Prof. Courthope does not agree either with those who regard Spenser "primarily as a poetical *philosopher*," or with Lowell, who thinks "the true use of Spenser is as a gallery of pictures," and who compares the moral to "a bit of gravel in a dish of strawberries and cream." The sense is, for Courthope, a characteristic part of his work, but the allegory is mainly interesting in so far as it serves the purposes of poetry, not then as a vehicle of moral truth. The designs of the poems are separately examined, and artistic unity is found even in *The Shepherd's Calendar*. These poems were his experiments in poetical diction. The design of the *Faery Queen* is found in the letter to Raleigh, not in the poem itself. "As he sought in *The Shepherd's Calendar* to treat the Eclogue in a new style, so in the *Faery Queen* he aimed at producing a variety of the Romantic Epic of the Italians." As is seen in Harvey's correspondence, he sought to "overgo Ariosto."

His works are examined to see "how far his conceptions were formed in harmony with the laws of his art, and how far his execution did justice to his subjects as he conceived them." In the examination of *The Shepherd's Calendar* from a metrical point of view, Mr. Courthope thinks that "the metres of several of his Eclogues are founded on what he erroneously believed to be the metre of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*," and that he read the Prologue with four accents instead of five, as follows:

"Whánne that A | príle with his | shówres | sóte  
The dróught | of Márch | had pérc'd | to the rôte," &c.

This is a remarkable mixture of dactylic-trochaic and iambic-anapaestic rhythm, the latter predominating in the following lines, but from Spenser's ignorance of Chaucer's language, it is barely possible that he so read the Prologue, for he does employ this "composite style" in this poem. It is pronounced, on the whole, "a truly beautiful and graceful, if somewhat artificial composition."

The *Faery Queen* is also examined at length and compared with Ariosto. "Ariosto's word-painting is unequalled for brilliancy and distinctness of color, but Spenser surpasses him in depth of imagination." Beside being a great picture-gallery, the *Faery Queen* "is also a vast experiment in English metrical composition," and Spenser's treatment of his stanza is judged to be

"a triumph of art." Spenser was the poet of chivalry and of mediaeval allegory. "He composed his poems in the spirit of a great painter, a great musician," and his *Faery Queen* is "a thing of beauty, a joy forever."

The next chapter on the growth of criticism and its effect on poetry, with notice of the poetical euphuists, traces the advance of national taste as seen in the later Elizabethan *Miscellanies* and the consequent development of poetical criticism. Gascoigne was here a pioneer, for his *Notes of Instruction concerning the Making of Verse* is the first critical treatise that we have on the verse-practice of the time. Campion, Webbe, Puttenham, and Sidney receive brief notice, and the four main groups of metrical composers are successively described, the university scholars, Harvey and Fraunce, who wished "to reform the national poetry on classical lines"; the sonnet writers, Watson, Constable, Lodge, Daniel, and others, who imitated Petrarch and the Italians until they ran out in the nonsense of Barnes; the court poets, Sidney, Dyer, Essex, Raleigh, Oxford, who have written some of the best lyrics of the age; and finally, the men of letters, "who embodied the spirit of the Renaissance in poetical romance or classical mythology," such men as Breton, Barnfield, Greene, Lodge, and Marlowe. These last have left the most permanent impress on the poetry of the time, and in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* we have the culmination of the poetry of passion. "Though his style is colored with the conceits and mannerism of the period, yet, as compared with the diction of contemporary Euphuistic writers, it has a fiery strength and vigor not to be found in any other man."

We now reach that form of literature for which the Elizabethan age was distinguished *par excellence*, and the last two chapters of the volume are devoted to the development of the drama. Schlegel's theory that Shakspeare "owed hardly anything to his predecessors" is rightly excepted to; such a theory is "the height of critical superstition," and Prof. Courthope devotes his efforts to showing the historical evolution of the drama, "the transition from pageant to theatre, from interlude to tragedy, comedy, and history." The professed historians of the drama, Collier, Ward, and Symonds, have done much to elucidate its history, but the author thinks that "something still remains to be done," and he devotes this chapter to tracing "the slow gradations by which the dramatic art passed out of the rudimentary conditions, peculiar to it in the Middle Ages, into the hands of those who brought the form of the romantic drama to its full perfection." Without going into details, which would take more space than we have at command, we may say that the facts fully justify Mr. Courthope's position. He investigates the progress of the stage from the Miracle Play to the Morality; the influence exercised upon the stage by the Court, the Universities, and the Inns of Court; the opposition of the Puritans and the effect of the building of theatres outside of the municipal jurisdiction of London; to all which were added the improvements in dramatic art made in the course of time. Prof. Courthope analyses many of these Moralities, and shows the gradual progression from allegorical personification to individual action, from mere dialogue to development of a complicated plot. *Like Will to Like* (1568) illustrates the manners of the time, and here we have a mixture of allegorical and individual characters, and the personal Vice, Nichol Newfangle. In *The Three Ladies of London* (1584), "the genius of the old Morality



probably reached the highest level of which it was capable": it is too a dramatic satire on the manners of the day. These were, however, very late examples of the Moralities. Full credit is given to John Heywood for the steps taken in advance by him, and under the influence of the study of Plautus and Terence, is finally reached the first regular comedy, Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* (about 1550). Progress is made in Gascoigne's translation of Ariosto's *Supposes* and in his *Glass of Government*, but Prof. Courthope omits to note that this last is based on the Latin *Acolastus*, founded on the parable of the Prodigal Son. It was no more original with Gascoigne than *The Supposes*. Gascoigne's *Jocasta* too was but a translation, from the Italian of Dolce, of the *Phoenissae*. Lyly's prose Court comedies mark the highest development in this direction. Prof. Courthope does not notice the supposed allegorical signification of the *Endymion*, which has been brought out in the Introduction to Mr. Baker's edition of that play. The dramatic movement from Interlude to Comedy is summed up, from didactic allegory to imitation of manners, thence to action of human personages in fuller plots and with greater refinement of dialogue.

So too was Tragedy evolved from Interlude, and here exception is taken to Symonds's view of two types of tragedy, one modelled after Seneca and the other after the Italian plays, the latter finally prevailing. The tragedies and tragi-comedies "all have a close affinity with the Interlude," and there was no "conflict between the type of tragedy favored by the Court and that dear to the people." As the *Mirror for Magistrates* presented tragedy in epic form, so the plays presented it in dramatic form. The influence of Seneca was plainly seen in our first regular tragedy, *Ferrex and Porrex*, or *Gorboduc* (1562), which Mr. Courthope speaks of only as Sackville's, ignoring Norton altogether, although he wrote more than half of it. Notwithstanding Schlegel's opinion, it is characterized as "a work of great merit," and so it was if we consider its time, but it was well for English tragedy that it did not develop on the lines of *Gorboduc*. Hughes imitated it in his *Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587), but this was the year of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, and no one thought of Seneca after that. Bale, with his *King Johan*, "probably written during the reign of Edward VI," began the evolution of Chronicle History out of the Interlude. So throughout the sixteenth century there was a gradual progress in dramatic development. The Moralities and Interludes, themselves developed from the old Miracle-Plays, gradually passed into Tragedy, Comedy, and Chronicle History, under the influence of the Renaissance.

The last chapter is occupied with a study of the infancy of the romantic drama as seen in the works of Greene, Peele, Marlowe, and Kyd. Now we find a conflict in England between the principles of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Puritanism showed itself in the attacks made upon the stage. Between 1570 and 1587 there were no less than six violent attacks in pamphlet form made upon the stage. Prof. Arber has given us a summary of these in his edition of Gosson's *School of Abuse* (1579), which was an invective against "Poets, Pipers, Players, and such-like Caterpillars of a Commonwealth." Being dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, it produced his *Apologie for Poetrie*, as Sidney did not relish the inclusion of Poets in this general onslaught. The Puritans had ample justification for their attacks. Englishmen had become *Italianated*, and here too Gascoigne had led the way, but he repented, so that

Whetstone, his friend, could indite funereal verses on *The Well-employed Life and Godly End of G. Gascoigne, Esquire*, which elegy the curious reader will find prefixed to Prof. Arber's edition of *The Steel Glass*. Greene, however, went further than Gascoigne in this process of *Italianisation*, and if what he states in his *Repentance* and his *Groats-worth of Wit* is true, he was veritably "a hard case." Courthope sees no reason to question the authenticity of his autobiography. Greene's dramas, all of which except *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* are thought to show Marlowe's influence, are successively noticed, and "what is best and most characteristic . . . is the poetry of his pastoral landscape, and his representation of the characters of women; in both of these respects he exercised an unmistakable influence on the genius of Shakspeare." Greene was the true predecessor of Shakspeare in comedy, as Marlowe was in tragedy. Peele is thought by Prof. Courthope to have "a finer range of imagination" than Greene, and he is given a higher rank than that usually assigned him by the historians of the drama. His two best plays, *The Arraignment of Paris*, which inspired Shakspeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *David and Bethsabe*, are alone noticed, and that briefly. The bulk of the chapter is rightly reserved for Marlowe, "the great genius who may justly be called the founder of English poetic drama." In Marlowe "the rupture with the Puritanic element of the nation was absolute and complete." Marlowe wrote "freed from the restraints of Conscience and Law." He believed in "the freedom of the human will," and he wrote accordingly. The incarnation of absolute power is seen in *Tamburlaine*, of knowledge in *Faustus*. "Tamburlaine is the type of resistless force; Faustus represents the resolute pursuit of knowledge as an instrument of material power." *Faustus* is pronounced "unquestionably Marlowe's greatest play; one of the greatest plays that the world possesses." Others have given the palm to *Edward II*. They are both great in different ways, but I must concur with the estimate of the final soliloquy of Faustus, "which, as a representation of mental agony and despair, is only equalled, in the whole range of the world's poetry, by the speech of Satan to the Sun in *Paradise Lost*." The other plays are briefly noticed, and some excellent criticism follows. Marlowe's violence and exaggeration are recognized; also, the ill-construction of his plots. His "theory of dramatic action is contrary to the constitution of human nature," for "it eliminates the factor of Conscience"; and "the narrowness of his conception of man and nature is seen in his representations of female character." As has been recognized by all critics, Marlowe could not paint a female character.

The chapter closes with a notice of Kyd, but he was only a disciple of Marlowe who exaggerated Marlowe's faults; rant and bloodshed are his predominant characteristics. Shakspeare rescued the drama "by restoring to tragedy the elements of conscience, religion, and chivalry, which Marlowe had expelled from it."

This volume carries forward the history of English poetry to the time of Shakspeare, and we await with interest its successors. Prof. Courthope's work traces with philosophic judgment, critical taste, and literary skill, the course of English poetry, and is a useful addition to its history, notwithstanding some defects. To each volume a very full analytical table of contents is prefixed, but indexes are wanting.

JAMES M. GARNETT.